Approved for Release: 2019/05/22 C06777241

(b)(3)

SECRET// NOFORN// (b)(3)

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(S// /NF) SUBJ: COMMENTS OF NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR TO NICARAGUA ON HIS UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A TRADE MISSION IN PANAMA (b)(3)

Central Intelligence Agency

14 November 1988

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SOURCE (b)(1)
(b)(3)

CONTEXT

(S// /NF) 1. IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 1988, NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR TO NICARAGUA ((PAK)) MYONG HAK COMMENTED (b)(3)
(b)(1)
ON THE RESULTS OF HIS (b)(1)
APPROXIMATELY MONTH-LONG DISCUSSIONS IN (b)(3)
PANAMA CITY WITH PANAMANIAN DEFENSE FORCES (FDP) COMMANDER GENERAL MANUEL ANTONIO ((NORIEGA)) AND PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. PAK SAID THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT OF HIS DELEGATION WAS TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NORTH KOREAN TRADE MISSION WITH DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES IN PANAMA. ACCORDING TO PAK, HIS EFFORTS IN THE END WERE UNSUCCESSFUL BECAUSE HIS TALKS WERE UNDERMINED BY THE VISIT OF A DELEGATION FROM SOUTH KOREA WHICH HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO PANAMA SPECIFICALLY TO SCUTTLE THE NEGOTIATIONS. PAK NOTED THAT THE VISIT OF THE SOUTH KOREAN DELEGATION HAD INCLUDED A GIFT OF A FLEET OF VEHICLES TO THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT. (b)(1)
COMMENT: THE VISITING SOUTH KOREAN (b)(3)
DELEGATION MENTIONED BY PAK MAY BE THE GROUP OF SOUTH KOREAN LEGISLATORS WHICH VISITED PANAMA CITY IN EARLY SEPTEMBER AND MET WITH VARIOUS SENIOR GOVERNMENT

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OFFICIALS. SEE PANAMA EMBTEL 9796, IIR 6 882 0351 88, 6 SEPTEMBER 1988, FOR DETAILS OF THIS VISIT, WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN PANAMA, WAS A ROUTINE ONE AND PLANNED BEFORE THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION'S VISIT.)

(S/ /NF) 2. COMMENT: THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION TRAVELED TO PANAMA WITH LITTLE TO OFFER THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO HELP SOLVE ITS LIQUIDITY PROBLEM OR TO HELP CREATE JOBS THROUGH FINANCING OF PUBLIC SECTOR PROJECTS. IT IS LIKELY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT DECIDED THAT THE UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING A NORTH KOREAN TRADE MISSION WERE NOT WORTH THE RISK OF DAMAGING PANAMA'S PROFITABLE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA.) (b)(1)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3)

COMMENT: NORIEGA TOLD THE SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY ATTACHE TO PANAMA COLONEL ((SONG)) IL-SANG ON 25 AUGUST THAT THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION, THEN STILL IN PANAMA, HAD PROPOSED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DPRK-PANAMANIAN COMMERCIAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. NORIEGA TOLD SONG THAT NO COMMITMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO THE NORTH KOREANS AND THAT PANAMA WAS NOT PLANNING TO DEVELOP ANYTHING WITH THEM. SEE PANAMA EMBTEL 9597, IIR 6 8820344 88, 30 AUGUST 1988.)

(S/ /NF) 3. COMMENT: (b)(1)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3)

THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION WAS IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE NICARAGUAN EMBASSY IN PANAMA CITY DURING ITS AUGUST - MID-SEPTEMBER VISIT AND WAS PROVIDED SOME ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT BY THE NICARAGUANS. SINCE PAK'S RETURN TO MANAGUA, SOME CONTACT HAS BEEN MAINTAINED BETWEEN PAK AND NORIEGA THROUGH THE NICARAGUAN EMBASSY. IN EARLY OCTOBER, PLANS WERE BEING MADE FOR THE VISIT OF UNSPECIFIED FDP PERSONNEL TO MANAGUA TO SEE PAK, AND IN EARLY NOVEMBER NORIEGA SENT A SMALL GIFT TO PAK THROUGH THE EMBASSY. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER ANY DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL TRADE MATTERS ARE CONTINUING.)

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